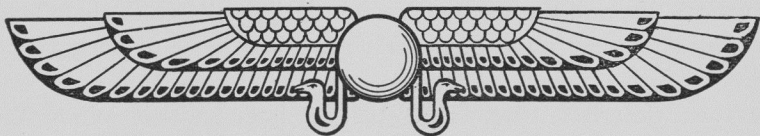


"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."



MERCURY.

EDITORIAL + STAFF:

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JOINING THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

WHEN a man becomes sincerely interested in Theosophy, an early thought is that of joining the Theosophical Society. To us who are within it and who long ago lost concern as to how the act might impress friends or observers, the matter appears quite single and plain. But, really, there are several complications, and one or another or all appears not a little embarrassing to a person who has felt the stirring of the Theosophic impulse, but is not yet sure of his own ground or of its. Let us step out of the group and note how it appears to such a person.

In the first place, there is a certain similarity, and yet also an unlikeness, to the joining a church. Of course, there is no profession of having been "converted" or having "undergone a change of heart"—to use phrases we all know; and assuredly there are no sacramental oaths registered or ritual ceremonies performed. Still, there seems to be some avowal of an interest in supersensual things, some implication of assurance that human life means more than feeding and accumulating and begetting. Is this to be understood as a claim to awakened spirituality, a formal renunciation of the devil and all his works? For the whole tenor of the Theo-

sophical Society expresses the thought that the real life is not the physical life, and the term "Wisdom-Religion" denies that Theosophy is a mere philosophy, or science, or piece of antiquarian lore.

Now, while it is true, as we shall see later on, that joining the Society commits an applicant to no more than one, and that a very general, proposition, it is certainly the fact that the Founders and Those who instigated them had in contemplation a far-reaching influence in social and individual regeneration. The time had come, in their judgment, when a new force must be applied to human evolution, when certain great truths must be lighted up with such vividness that all eyes should be attracted to and secure them, when the practical impulses enfolded in those truths must be so radiated that men and society should be revolutionized in spirit and a wholly different motive and method become prevalent through civilization. The truths which it is the special mission of the Theosophical Society to promulgate are Karma and Reincarnation, and the highest authority has said that these are to prove, if anything can, the redeemers, the regenerators, the saviors of the Western world. But these are more than facts in Nature. They are laws for life, criteria for action, impellants to motive, reconstructors of character. If a man adequately grasps these, perceives their bearings before, around, and after him, feels their influence in his mind and his heart, he can never thereafter be a denier of spirit or a contemner of spiritual things. And so far as that effect is apprehended by those within and described by those without the Society, so far does the Society have the character of a Church, *i. e.*, an organized effort for the conservation and radiation of spiritual vitalities.

But these remote objects, though undoubtedly real, need not have immediate consideration by those thinking of membership in the Society. Their object may be study, closer examination of some one or more of the many departments in Theosophy, general sympathy with a liberal movement, special interest in its fraternal aims. Any one of these is ample reason for membership, insight into the more sublimated bearings of the movement being a question of individual temperament. There is no concealment, no Jesuitical presence; any one may examine the whole field with

only the heartiest encouragement from every F. T. S. If he cares for only one part of it, he is entitled to that. Hence the reformatory aspect of Theosophy, like its scientific or its philosophical, may be slighted by him whose concern is for another. And hence, too, any member of the T. S. is quite within truth in affirming that he joined only for that.

In the second place, there very naturally occurs to a person approaching the doorway of the Society a fear that membership may commit him to some doctrinal platform, some body of dogma, some creed or standard, possibly not expressing his convictions, certainly cramping his intellectual independence. He does not, it is true, hear very often the term "authority," but he notices that several books are frequently referred to as if final, and that a quotation from them has much the same effect as a "proof-text" in a theological controversy. Sometimes he observes that the assertion that So-and-so has said thus-and-so is made in a tone which implies that further inquiry is now estopped; or perhaps he suspects that the belief in an infallible Bible is as strong among Theosophists as among Christians, though the volume itself is different; or at times he perceives in the frequent phrase "we are told" an intimation that, having been so told, there is nothing more to be said. Now, if in any degree a vigorous thinker, and especially if rejoicing in a recent escape from the shackles, internal or external, of an authoritative creed, he is not at all ready to again put himself under restraint, and if membership in the Theosophical Society means the acceptance of a thing as true because somebody else says it is true he prefers freedom to the Society.

Now, there are two ways in which this fear may be dispelled. The first is by the proof, easily produced from its Constitution and official utterances, that the Theosophical Society repudiates the exaction from applicants of more than one article of belief—that of Humanity as a Universal Brotherhood. Besides the promotion of such fraternity, it does, indeed, state two additional aims—the study of the religions of humanity, and the investigation of man's internal powers; but each is a purely optional pursuit, nobody being obliged to study any other religion than his own, or even to believe that he *has* any latent powers. If he believes that all men are brothers and ought to be treated so, the door is opened

forthwith, for the Society wishes to be as world-wide as humanity, and to shut out none but those who have no faith in that humanity and no purpose to protect and cherish it.

The second way is by the proof, equally accessible, that the Founders of the Society, its most prominent leaders, and all of its best exponents, state with the utmost emphasis that every man must progress through his own individual assimilation of truth, that authoritative imposition of dogma is contrary to the whole genius of human development, that nobody is empowered or capable to insist upon his views as final; that every body is entitled—obliged, indeed—to accept as truth only that which appears to him to be truth; that slavish deference to other minds is not self-respectful, or respectful to the sacred cause of Truth, or really conducive to sound thought or mental discipline. The cries “I am of Paul,” “I of Apollos,” are just as distasteful to Apostles in the Theosophic movement as they were eighteen centuries ago to those in the Christian movement. The most illustrious Theosophist in the civilized world, the only one known to have overpassed the boundaries of ordinary humanity and to have entered regions inaccessible to all but Adepts, has again and again, in print and in conversation, disclaimed the slightest coercive jurisdiction over thought, and has insisted that all have the same right to independent judgment as has she. In fact, no one has been more explicit in stating that the whole process of illumination is through the unfoldment of a man’s own nature, for that no outside agency can or may or will convince him of a doctrine if he rejects it, and that it is absurd to suppose that force can succeed where argument fails.

But, it may be said, this is not the attitude of all Theosophists. One sees or hears at times very positive assertions that such and such opinions are correct, and that dissidents are therefore not Theosophically sound. Undoubtedly this is so, but it is simply a phenomenon which is seen in all Societies. Every large group must contain some men who are opinionated, some who are dogmatic, some who do not realize their own limitations, some who perceive clearly enough one idea but do not at all perceive the qualifications and converse facts attendant upon any idea. Then, too, there are always some who make loyalty consist in submissive-

ness, and who therefore think only within what they conceive to be the prescribed lines. But no one or all of these is the Society, nor has he authority to speak for the Society; for a part cannot be greater than the whole, and the whole has pronounced that there is no such thing as orthodoxy, or a standard, or tests, or impositions, or limitations. Nowhere on earth is there more unbounded freedom of opinion than in the Theosophical Society. This, of course, is not saying that all men are equally well-informed, or that some have not had opportunity for larger acquirement of fact than others. Most fortunately for all of us who wish to learn, there are several expounders who have enjoyed peculiar facility of intercourse with far-advanced minds, and who have been allowed to impart very generous measures of information thus derived. But as no system is perfect, so is no individual; and along with great treasure has come some dross. In the richest of these disclosures we sometimes find contradictions, or assertions which seem to clash with finer concepts of spiritual things, or perhaps propositions a trifle wild, grotesque, fantastic, not commending themselves to sober reflection. Here is where distinctions come in. Like the Judge in "Eighty Days around the world," we must discriminate. Some of us who are among the heartiest believers in Theosophy and the Theosophical Society claim this right as inherent and inalienable, and would unhesitatingly leave the Society if it was denied or even curtailed. But there is not the slightest possibility of either. So that a man considering application for membership may be sure, not only that his freedom of thought is as great within as without the Society, but that any proposal to restrict it would be resented by the members themselves.

In the third place, a person hovering around the doorway has occasional misgivings over the reputation the Society possesses in certain sections of the press and the social world. "The Theosophical Society!" says one. "Oh yes, the latest aggregation of cranks and fanatics, founded on miracles and sustained by credulity!" "Strange delusion," says another, "for this practical age, where we have done away with superstition and believe only what we can prove!" And a third and a fourth and a whole chorus of complacents who have not read a page of Theosophy, could not give a definition of its simplest term, and do not even

know the history or the nature of the absurdities they confidently believe themselves, unite in a scornful laugh at the little band of eclectics who expect to regenerate mankind through a sentiment and a superstition. To a sensitive person, or to a person who has lofty faith in the soundness of the "vox populi," such ridicule seems very dreadful, and he asks himself whether he has the independence to undergo it.

There are several considerations which may brace his spirit. One is that the value of criticism can be very easily ascertained by testing the knowledge of the critic. Ask the airy contemner of the Society what he understands by Karma, or what is the constitution of the human soul, or why reincarnation seems plausible, and you will generally receive either silence or nonsense. How, then, is he fitted to pronounce upon that of which he confessedly knows nothing? Or one may take the ground that if conduct is to be determined by conviction, a believer should join the Society for the same reason that a disbeliever should keep out of it. Or one may say that he is not in the least concerned with what other people think of the Society or of him; he thinks as he pleases, acts as he chooses, and joins what he likes. People do not long keep up opposition when they find that it is laughed at, and no very heroic fortitude is needed to smile at wagging tongues. And, indeed, now that Theosophy is more widely understood and the public growing familiarized with its realness, the scoffer is becoming more scarce and the respectful investigator more frequent. Any one who timidly shuns the Society for fear of unpopularity may simply lose some years of study and Karma-making service, without having found any gain for that loss.

Now, what is the attitude of the Theosophical Society towards outsiders who are interested? It does not persuade or cajole or argue any one into entrance; it does not say that study is impossible until one has joined, or that spiritual vitality can never be achieved till one writes F. T. S. after his name; it has not a syllable about "uncovenanted mercies" or exclusive rights or pre-empted territory. But it does take the manly and entirely straightforward position that here is a voluntary Society, with the broadest platform and the most philanthropic motive in the world; that there is no question of self-aggrandizement, but merely of altruistic

effort after the general good; that its motto, "There is no religion higher than Truth," expels all ecclesiasticism or bigotry from its aims. It says that co-operation is as genuine a principle in study as in business, and that in the effort to secure and to diffuse light every sincere man or woman can contribute something, small or great. It takes the ground that united action calls into being many useful agencies which no single person can effect, and that there are organic influences peculiar to an organism; hence that in literature, publications, Branch discussions and work, not a few instructive questions find solution which they would not have found but for a Society. The member and the Society mutually strengthen and benefit each other.

To this it says also, as a fact which it believes can be demonstrated, but which nobody need accept if indisposed, that the establishment of the Theosophical Society was in pursuance of the wishes of certain great Intelligences who seek at this epoch to revive decaying interests most important to humanity, and who perceived the need of just this agency to assist Them. While it cannot be said that joining the Society is a favor to Them and will be repaid, it is quite fair to say that any active help to the Society is a help to Them in Their work, and that the person so helping is more within the range of Their interest and influence. The co-operation may be humble, but is none the less real. It is something to feel, not for vanity but for encouragement, that we are in ranks which have such Generals, and that in the grand scheme to reunite dissevered humanity, enlarge the realm of attainable knowledge, fan the spark of spiritual aspiration, and nerve the forces of altruistic beneficence, our small powers are not in the resisting mass of conservatism and prejudice, not even laid away uselessly in a napkin, but on the side of Light and Truth and Advance and Freedom. One great author, who was privileged with close communication with some of those Generals and whose works were the first to waken the West to give hearing and attention to Theosophy, ends *The Occult World* with an account of the Theosophical Society, and his closing words to those who share its spirit and sympathize with its aims are "Register, Register, Register!"

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF THEOSOPHY.

Part II—Shadows.

IT seems strange to speak of shadows in connection with Theosophy, which, translated, means God's Wisdom. Can there be any shadows, any discords, any evil in the Divine? Aye, but we are not in that state of being called Divine any more than ice is steam, or than it is the life-giving oxygen, or flame-born hydrogen, yet we know that ice may become steam, and that in essence it is oxygen and hydrogen. So, humanity may become divinity; and we know that essentially—*i. e.*, in its hidden essence, in its first cause—it is divine, yet are we human. We see with human eyes; we cognize with human consciousness; and both eyes and consciousness are limited to the narrow bounds of the lower self; and that lower self encased in its physical prison which it actually considers itself is farther removed from the divine consciousness than the block of ice is from the atomic state of its component gases. The Creative *Æons* produced the three great worlds, each one more complex and farther removed in consciousness from the Divine before the material condition, the material worlds were involved. And when the physical sun came forth "to shine by day, and the moon by night," lo! the pairs of opposites were established. Light was followed by darkness; good confronted with evil; destructive force wrestled with creative power; and the sun God bathed with dragons.

"Light and Shadow! Shadow and Light! Twins that were born at the birth of the sun." And until the sun sleeps in *Pralaya*, shadow and light will forever abide with us. They are:

"Sister and brother, born of one mother, made of a thought of the Infinite One." Each has its uses, each its redemptions and benedictions. Therefore, in all truth, one can speak of the shadows as well as the light of Theosophy. Light is one, Shadows are many; but again the light is above and shines far and wide; while the shadows are of the earth, and cannot reach beyond.

It has often been remarked that it is strange that in a philosophy based on utter selflessness such as Theosophy, there should be

found so much personality, but it is not at all strange. It would be far stranger were it otherwise. It is the result of contrast. We all know that the greater the light the denser becomes the shadow contrasted with it. Think of the intense shadows in the wake of the electric light as compared with those around a taper, and it will become clear why it is that the most luminous religions have dark records; and why also personality obtrudes itself in Theosophy. The superhuman brightness of the ideal of Selflessness, as it shines in the great Renunciation, makes human egoism appear hideously black. Were the ideal less glorious, the defect would seem less glaring.

But there is another fact to be considered in relation to Shadows; it is well known that when efforts are made to attain any virtue, any higher development, there is a corresponding energy aroused in the contrary direction. It seems as if the forces of the lower nature that take form in the dark astral regions of selfish thought and desire, sensed their impending destruction and gathered together in their might to prevent the human soul from becoming their conqueror. And in this great struggle whose battle-field is the human soul there is no compromise; one either has to be conqueror or conquered; hence the very effort to reach a sublime ideal may result in producing, for a time at least, an effect decidedly opposed to this ideal. Then, some may say, "Why make the effort?" Why, indeed? Because it is the law. Only by struggle can we overcome. Shall we prefer the horizons of the dead level of the human desert to those of the lofty peaks of superhuman attainment because precipices yawn along the mountain path? Shall we reject the electric light because it accentuates the darkness, because electricity sometimes kills, and cling to the old-fashioned taper because it is harmless? Most decidedly not; evolution forbids such cowardice. The sleeping god within the human heart impels the race forward. Onward, onward, no matter at what cost; no matter how many seem to fall by the way, their fall is only a seeming. Only for a moment are they lost in the darkness. For the accentuation of the evil, the triumph of the lower nature, only hastens its own destruction. The discord and the suffering resulting from the shadows are spurs that rouse the soul to greater effort; they are object lessons teaching the cause of the

shadows and the means to rise out of it into the Light. It is only in the shadow that some can see clearly; the light dazzles and blinds them.

Now that the cause of the shadows has been considered, let us pass on to the nature of the peculiar shadows that follow the light of Theosophy.

The Central Sun of Theosophy emits three primary rays; viz., Selflessness, Unity or Universality, and Knowledge. Each ray is a sun to benighted man; and each has its polar shadow—Selflessness the light, Personality its shadow, Universal Oneness accentuates Separateness. Black Magic creeps round Spiritual Knowledge. Now, of all these lights Spiritual Knowledge is by far the most important, because it comes nearer to us in our present limited consciousness; and it is through extended knowledge or consciousness only that we shall come into the fullness of the radiance of Universality and Selflessness.

Certainly, the one great purpose of the Theosophical Society, the acknowledged standard-bearer of Theosophy, is to disseminate the one true knowledge—Spiritual knowledge, which is sadly lacking in the intellectual world. Intellectuality, with all its brilliant achievements, is as yet merely physical, or rather mechanical; it has to become chemical; that is to say, it must ascend to a higher plane; it can do this only by the help of the spiritual ray.

Mr. Dvivedi in his excellent article on "Spiritual Culture" speaks of the spiritual element as "life in science, thought in philosophy, love in religion and ethics." Life, conscious life, in nature as in man, relates each one of us to the Cosmos, and to humanity as a whole. The realization of it in our own consciousness makes "the clod, the rock, the glistening gold, show all as one," and leads us away from the shows of phenomenal life to the One, Eternal Reality. Next comes the knowledge of self, which knowledge may be resolved into the science of Thought; and, lastly, Love through whose magic power Life and Thought become one.

The road to this triple knowledge is through faith; the faith that within each one of us are the latent potencies of a god; faith that the Higher Self of each one is the eternal atomic ray from the central Sun of Being itself. The consciousness of that Higher Self, the powers it can wield, are impossible of demonstration. We take on

faith the assertion that a ray of light traveling 183,000 miles per second takes 50 to 60 years to come from some fixed stars to our earth; because some one who has devoted years to astronomy, and in whom we have confidence, declares it to be a fact, and in the same way we believe the results of spiritual knowledge because the seers and mystics of past and present have proven for themselves that they exist. Unless we believe, we cannot attain. Faith is our guide out of the darkness into the light. But the polar shadow of faith is Superstition. Superstition is born of fear and limitation; it clings to the personal; it relies on material aids because it fears spiritual powers; superstition enshrines the teacher rather than the teachings; it enthrones the personal will; it deifies the human. When the early Christians forgot the Christ in the worship of Jesus, superstition triumphed over knowledge and the church failed spiritually. It is true that the church then began a career of material success, for the gifts of the spirit are not the so-called good things of the world and the flesh. Superstition is akin to pride, to arrogance; it breedeth love of power; hence, its companion is that abuse of knowledge, that intensification of personal will and selfishness, that is known as Black Magic. This false magic lives and feeds on superstition, on the crowd of fears that spring from the giant fear—self. It is powerless against pure altruistic love, for love “seeketh not itself,” therefore, it knoweth not fear. And when Black Magic plays upon superstitious selfish fear, the dark shadow of untruth obscureth the light. Behold, “Light is swallowed up by darkness.” And thus from a lack of true knowledge, the knowledge of the spirit, the human soul limits itself still more and the brightness of the ray of One-ness or Universality is dimmed by the shadow of separateness which manifests as intolerance. And what is intolerance? It is the effort of a soul, earnest yet blind, and filled with fear to keep close to truth. Unconsciously it senses itself incapable of perceiving the true essence of thoughts and things; therefore, it demands a stamp, a label, and that stamp and label must belong to its own limitation. And the measure of that soul’s earnestness will be also the measure of its intolerance.

There remains now Personality, the shadow-pole of selflessness—Personality or the accentuation of the lower self, the last shadow to vanish before the sun rays of the higher self.

Now, the question rises, How may these shadows be dissipated? Obviously, by the same means that physical shadows are dissipated. When the electric lights were introduced, the same question arose and the difficulty was overcome by placing lights in such relations to each other that no dense shadows were possible, and the light became uniform. "As below, so above," we may learn from the electric engineer. Let us multiply the centers of light; let us place them in the care of the darkness. But first, it is necessary to know that the shadows exist. Secondly, where they are. To think that any philosopher interpreted by Kama-Manasic brains, any religion enthroned in human hearts, any organization composed of human beings, men and women of the 19th century, can be all light without shadow of darkness, is to think contrary to fact, contrary to law. And the result of this false thinking will be to make the shadows far denser. Let us then recognize the shadows; then we can place a lamp lighted from the spiritual fires right in its midst.

What did H. P. Blavatsky answer when asked if talismans were of use as a safeguard against evil influences? Was it not that the most powerful talismans are right motive, right living, and right will, or words to that effect? "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God," and they who see God need not fear evil. The pure and the loving are clad in double armor against psychic contagion. And those who fix their thoughts, who focus their soul's vision upon the Eternal Tat-Sat, will not be easily drawn away by an ephemeral personality. They, also, who have glimpsed ever so dimly spiritual clairvoyance will not be long deluded by illusive phenomena. Purity, love, and fixed purpose to find God, make good lamps to chase away the shadows of superstition. And in the very midst of the darkness of intolerance, which is a barring out, in thought, of all ideas not bearing *our* pet label, let us light the lamps of unity, of Universal Truth. Truth shines for all. Like unto the sun, its beams warm and gladden all peoples, and its rays may be imprisoned in the dried leaf, the charred trunk, the heavy black lump of coal only waiting for an impulse to become again welcome light and heat; so every ism, every idea that struggles for expression, may hide the fire of truth. It is the duty of every disciple of Theosophy to liberate these fires, to show

how they radiate or once did radiate from the central sun. Theosophy, God's wisdom, calls upon us to unite scattered truths into one truth. Let us obey.

And now we approach the dense shadow of Self. The mightiest of all the dark ones is the huge distorted shadow of this finite lower self, which effectually hides the glories of the real self. And where is it not—that shadow? Everywhere in our consciousness it lurketh. It maketh spots on the face of the sun itself. For self is of many densities, of many aspects, from the gross piggishness of the sensual to the refined, subtile phase called by the wordly self-respect, individuality, and righteousness. Self masquerades as reform, poses as charity, disguises itself as modesty, and even veils itself in the incense floating heavenwards from the altar of sacrifice. What can be done to banish this all-obscuring darkness? Lamps will not suffice. No, it is necessary to keep aflame the three-fold fire of the heart, the fire of nature-love, which is sympathy; of human love, which is altruism; of divine love, that is God. And the fires will spread and fill our entire being with heat and light, then the shadows of self will disappear. The human soul, purified, will become a spiritual soul; and a spiritual soul is a strong, potent, silent, beneficent force, radiating love and help to all the worlds forevermore.

MARIE A. WALSH.

OCEAN OF LIFE.

[READ BEFORE THE TORONTO THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.]

SOME old forgotten writer fifty-six years B. C. wrote:
 “Youth is like the rapidity of a river, flowing down a hill;
 Manhood, like a drop of water, transient, unsteady; and Human
 Life like froth!

And another Master wrote far earlier:

“Riches and the life of man are transient as drops of water upon a lotus leaf.”

Poor straws of Humanity, swept on the waves of passion from the shores of the past to those of the future! Swept, as they may be, by the tides of Karma, far out to sea; yet guided by the unerring instinct which in the end will make them part of that sanctified, purified host. Having journeyed 'cross the Ocean of Life, resisting alike its storms and its turmoil, at last arriving on that

shore where the great Master-hands are ever stretched forth to save and aid the broken strands of that once glorified Spirit-ray.

How is this journey to be accomplished? Is it to be undertaken without method, without aim, without purpose? No, we are not merely straws swept hither and thither wherever our Karmic nature wafts us—but conscious, desirous, earnest souls with definitely mapped-out charts for our life journey. Charts which if followed duly bring them to the haven of infinite rest, where indeed stand Those Blessed Ones, whose mission, then, it is to show these tired, way-worn, surf-torn human souls the Paramita heights, and lead them to those heights by rugged winding paths. Unhappily, this conscious effort is but rarely met with in the ordinary Ego at this stage of his evolution—and many a journey ends, but in the ebb of the tide which again and again hurls him back to those dark roaring waters wherefrom there seems small escape, a formless mass of wreckage that but sullies the ocean in which he moves!

It may be that in the course of ages of wave buffeting, the soul faintly begins to understand the mission of its wondrous transit from shore to shore, intelligently trying to get some glimmering concept of how to make that journey one of safety. Yet here again it probably fails, and instead of keeping its starboard lights trimmed and its steering-gear in perfect order, the helmsman, Manas, deserts the wheel-house, and joins in those lower pleasures which ever delight the senses of the ship's crew. Immersed in these, he notes not the deceitful calm of Maya's ocean, with its glittering dazzling waves, till a sudden squall plunges the tiny barque into those Mayavic waters and naught but its wreckage approaches the "other shore." Or may be, after long æons of journeying, it has buffeted the ordinary storms, and on approaching its destination becomes the victim on shifting sands of selfish environment, only to be saved by timely perception of the revolving gleams from the lighthouse of Intuition which alone can guide that mortal mariner, warning him 'gainst quicksand and hidden rock. For "the light from the one Master, the one unfading golden light of spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the disciple from the very first. Its rays thread through the thick dark clouds of matter."

But notwithstanding this, the voyage of souls is ever one of peril and of danger—fraught with doubts and fears that in themselves are so many unmanageable ropes in life's rigging, caused alone by the ignorance and carelessness of him who trims the sails. As the shore is neared the difficulties and dangers increase a thousandfold; now, instead of squalls and storms, which oftentimes drive him before them right toward the port of Destination, there lie those dreaded breakers and reefs, mayhap covered by the slime and refuse left by others who essayed the passage and met disaster in other days. There, too, he encounters boulders, sharp hidden rocks, or deceitful shallows, all of which require increase of skill, of knowledge, of perseverance, else his chances are far less than on that fair morning when he heaved anchor and set sail on the mystic sea. When thro' the opalescent mist that enshrouded the rosy dawn, he saw glinting the Sun of Truth as it rose before him, with its netting of mother-of-pearl, and gave promise of a passage of such fairness that he spread his sails with glee and heeded not the warning of those distant clouds. But he had yet to learn life's bitter lessons; had, too, to learn that "no efforts,—not the smallest,—whether in right or wrong direction, can vanish from the world of causes, for in the 'great journey' causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid justice rules the world; with mighty sweep of never-erring action it brings to mortals lives of weal or woe, the Karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds." But as he nears the "other shore" all his energies are concentrated on steering safely amid those cruel rocks who hid their heads beneath the surf and beckoned to their prey. Here every science and energy is required to keep the barque off those terrible destroyers—those subtler forces that, as the shore is neared, ever battle, in "unseen array," and wait for those unguarded moments when with jagged points they stave in the sides of a craft that perhaps otherwise had safely passed the major dangers—now fated but to be torn asunder by hidden demons that stood as final tests upon the shores of Eternal Light.

So, though every nerve be strained to purpose, every sense alert lest even now the voyage ends in disaster, yet ere this, if that mortal mariner be wise, he has taken on board that Pilot who alone knows rocks, reefs and shallows. By standing aside, al-

lowing the Pilot to take command, he safely stems the tide and rides at anchor as the day again begins to dawn. But for those hapless ones whose ignorance and self-conceit have made them scorn the Pilot's aid—how fare they? There stand lights on the shore—false ones, moving 'mid the true, steady gleams held by the Master's hands—false and misleading, like the *ignis fatuus* over bogs and fens; lights that dazzle and deceive; lights that distort and conceal the rocks, till a sudden crash and jar tells that the vessel has struck and is sinking steadily beneath the waves of darkness and despair. Yet even now, though all seems lost, the mariner can, if he make brave effort, yet reach that Shore, if but he catch the gleam of lanterns held by loving steady hands, and when battling in the surf with all the wreckage of that one voyage swirling round, still is he not lost! If now he struggles on, dashed against the rocks, again, again, covered with their slime, bruised, crushed and swirled in the eddies of illusion's dark waters; if bravely still he nerves his efforts for that desperate final struggle—he will yet conquer the black waves, yet will gain the shores of Light where outstretched, loving hands will rescue this storm-tossed Ego, and by the lantern of Renunciation shed a lustre on that path by which all who have crossed the ocean ascend to the heights above—heights capping the pure white cliffs which ever stand as beacons whereby that storm-worn one knows that rest and peace are nigh!

Oceans of Life have many ports—and are called by many names—according to the state of progress and evolution of those traversing them. We have those rhythmic legends drawn from the night of Time, which tell us of the place these waters occupy in Cosmic record.

First, the Teachings tell of waters as the synonym of Akâsha, that primordial Ocean of Space on which the Self-born Spirit moves, and gives order to chaos, and to the darkness, Light—mystic waters, far beyond the sensing of Humanity—a celestial ocean of ether, far beyond the ken of science. Then we are taught that water is the third principle of the material Universe as likewise in the realm of Spirit, that feminine principle, a synonym of the gods as taught in the Vedas; that Mother side of Nature where harmony alone generates; the mother of the god of love.

In Orphic Theogony she is Venus—Aphrodite as the personified sea, and the prototype of Mary (*mare, i. e. sea*), mother of the Western Christos, god of love baptised and purified in the waters of sorrow.

In the regular breathing of this Ocean, its contractions and expansions, infinite and shoreless though it be, pulsating with its ebb and flow, here we are taught to know that the noumenon of Matter exists—and by its tides are governed the Universal vibrations of all atoms. Thus we find those embryonic worlds, *nebulae* or star-stuff, as the Teachings call it, could well be termed “atoms afloat on that Ocean of Infinitude, the abode of Truth and Harmony, without boundary or end.” So these primordial waters were prepared for the reception of that one Ray, the Logos, which contains in itself those seven other rays. And the “Radiant essence” curdles with its milk-white foam this Ocean of Life, and spreads through the “depths” of Space, reawakening to sentient life those “Hosts of souls” who hover over the stormy sea of human life. And as the Ocean symbolizes the mother—heart of Nature—so “do the sun-fluids impart all motion and awaken all into life.” It is but desire for existence. Those inexorable laws of Manvantaric motion, the harmony of which but serve to impel all beings, from mineral to man, to journey across the Ocean of Life, are regulated and guided by the Blessed Ones as Pilots direct not only the ways of “those that go down in ships,” but the mighty energies of every wave and billow of that fluidic element wherein the Cosmic Soul fulfills its cycles of the Day. For, remember the Ocean of Matter does not divide into its potential drops until the sweep of the Life impulse reaches the evolutionary stage of man-birth.

These primordial waters, as we before said, are but the Suprastral Light, the first radiation of which is Cosmic Substance. For we must bear in mind that there is but one universal element, though the world of phenomena has many aspects; yet from super-human, through human to sub-human beings, all are part of that Divine Essence of which the human soul has not received even as yet its true modicum. Yet we ask, why all this buffeting of relentless waves, this voyage of many ills? why in the rosy dawn of that far-off time when an Ego leaves the home of “his lost others” to begin the voyage which promises such halcyon times—why

all these storms and squalls and wrecks? Why make him the flotsam and jetsam on the tide of Life? Since that he bore within that secret casket, a Ray of Pure Spirit, which acting as a compass ever directed him toward the Land of the Rising Sun, where all was bathed in the golden light of love and peace and harmony—why should not the Great Lord Admirals have seen that the vessel bearing such priceless treasure be piloted and guided throughout its voyage, and that the mariner be saved alike from accident of flood or storm?

Was it not because, when the barque of that mariner left port, the early sun glinted on the painted figurehead and read below its name, "Experience"? Was it not that by sailing in this vessel the Great Lord Admirals knew that that mariner with his crew, if rightly disciplined and skillfully handled, would bear him safely across the Waters of Life? But if that crew be allowed to follow their own devices, pleasures and desires, many a sorry lesson would their Captain have to learn ere he could render up his log-book with a clear record to those Lords of Light who awaited his coming on "the other shore." Was it not by his barque "Experience" alone he could learn to control and govern those who were his servants? If he permitted lack of discipline, soundings forgotten, and sails unfurled, in the teeth of the wind, would it be any marvel if his ship met with disaster, or possibly wreckage? It is only by controlling with sternest discipline those lower forces, and training them to act under orders, that we can ever expect to gain a successful ending to the voyage on this Ocean of Life. Those Lords of Light, in sending the mariner on such a voyage, know full well the dangers and difficulties which await him; but, having entrusted that Spark of Divine Ray to act as compass and guide, they rest content, well knowing that, no matter how broken, bruised, humbled or buffeted the mariner may be, the compass itself can never come to harm, but must return, in all its pure golden glory, to their keeping, after its voyage in the barque "Experience" is at an end.

These Lord Admirals, if so I may presume to name them, are called the "Sons of Light" because "they emanate from that Infinite Ocean of Light, whose one pole is Pure Spirit, far beyond our comprehension, and the other, the Matter in which it condenses,"

then "crystallizing" as typified by the briny oceans of the world's planisphere such as we cross and recross between its various contingents. This Ocean of Light becomes more and more materialized, until we find the waters of Immortality have evaporated to such an extent as to leave nothing much beyond the dense gross material manifesting around us. Matter, though in one sense the deceptive dregs and washings of that Light whose Rays are the creative forces, yet it has in it the full presence of the Soul thereof, and that principle of increate Essence which not even the "Sons of Light," perfected Beings though they be, will ever know.

Thus we see, though exhausted, bleeding, broken-limbed, though the mortal Ego be; falling as it does ever into the sea of Maya, where fierce winds hurl it hither and thitherward, where, at the mercy of every gale "they drift into the eddies and disappear within the first great vortex."

Those, in fact, who have not yet learned the secret of "Eternal Life's pure waters clear and crystal," but who have but known the muddy torrents of monsoon tempests wherein they are swirled and hurled, caught up by every wave of weak desire—they have to take issue with themselves and strike out boldly and bravely. Those only "who have laved their feet in the waters of Renunciation can ever aid their brothers toiling up behind so that soiled and travel-stained with their journey 'cross this turbulent Ocean, strive as they reach its shore to climb the steep path which leadeth to the Master." And for this journey certain rules were given thus:—

"Be like the Ocean, which receives all streams and rivers. The Ocean's mighty calm remains unmoved."

"Guard thou the lower lest it soil the higher."

"The way to final freedom is written within thyself."

"Sweet are the fruits of Rest and Liberation for the sake of Self, but sweeter still the fruits of long and bitter duty, of renunciation for the sake of others, of suffering fellow-men."

"Be of good cheer, daring pilgrim to the other shore. The dreary task is done, the labor well nigh o'er. The wide abyss that gaped to swallow thee is almost spanned. Thou hast now conquered Mara and his furious host."

"Build high the wall lest the fierce rush of battling waves that

mount and beat its shore from out the great world's Maya ocean swallow up the pilgrim, yea even when the victory's achieved."

'Remember thou that fightest for man's liberation—each failure is success, and each sincere attempt wins its reward in time.'

"The silver star now twinkles out the news to the night-blossoms. The streamlet to the pebbles ripple out the tale; dark ocean waves will roar it to the rocks surf-bound; scent-laden breezes sing it to the vales, and stately pines mysteriously whisper, "A Master has arisen, a Master of the Day." He standeth now like a white pillar to the west, upon whose face the rising sun of Thought Eternal poureth forth its first most glorious waves. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, spreadeth out in shoreless space."

"Behold the mellow light that floods the Eastern sky. In songs of praise both heaven and earth unite. Hark, from the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the victor bathes, all Nature's wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim: A pilgrim hath returned back "from the other shore." Peace to all beings! Peace!

FIO HARA.

THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

QUESTION CCCXLVIII.

H. P. B. advises members of the T. S. to have no money transactions with fellow members, as money transactions between people tend in some cases to produce ill-feeling.

CONSTANCE WACHTMEISTER.—H. P. Blavatsky certainly did not mean, if she gave the advice quoted in the question, that we should hold our hands from help or close our hearts to sympathy with the needy. If Theosophy teaches anything it is self sacrifice. The Theosophist whose ready sympathies do not go out to those in want everywhere, and most of all to the members of his own household of faith, has missed it would seem, the first object of the T. S., namely: the forming of a universal brotherhood. Neither

can H. P. B. have meant to say that it is unwise, for example to transact the ordinary financial operations of the T. S.; these money transactions are necessary and unavoidable. We must look deeper for the meaning of the warning. The injunction of Theosophy is give; always, give, give of your love, your strength, your time, and of your means. Our duty is service. But remember, in the giving, you expect nothing in return. The giving that looks for money is unworthy and cheap. The Theosophical ideal is far beyond such sordid considerations.

The T. S. is a vehicle for the spread of divine wisdom. It is not primarily an institution for the help of people on the material plane; it is not the refuge of those in need of wordly goods; the need that the T. S. seeks to satisfy is the spiritual. We degrade the society if we join it for any other motive. We may indeed receive the help extended to us, no matter on what plane, in the the spirit of the giver, whether the help come to us from a fellow member or not. But if we are careful to remember that it is not to receive financial help that we join the T. S., we shall be able to keep in mind our true relation to one another and understand, in part at least, what H. P. B. meant.

It was, perhaps, in the mind of H. P. B. to avoid the ill-feeling that sometimes arises between borrower and lender, when the advice against money transactions between members was given. Any misunderstanding here may be wholly avoided if the one who lends will consider the loan as a gift. Such an attitude of the lender to the borrower will quite avoid the irritable feeling that arises from the broken promise of the other to repay.

If there be a business partnership between two members of the T. S., both should remember that it is not as such fellow members, that they are also partners. "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Their business is Cæsar, their membership in the society represents the divine side of their lives. The two relations can be kept quite distinct if we will have it so.

There is, however, another aspect to the case. The admonition of H. P. B. probably had in view also the abuse to which the possession of occult powers was liable. The white magic of the spiritual man might under the pressure of subtile temptation as-

sume the dark hues of black magic. As man rises into the finer planes, the dangers which assail him are less material and more powerful because more insinuating in their nature, it is quite conceivable how, in a person possessed of occult powers, the thought that a fellow member should aid him financially, becomes first a desire and then a temptation to bend the other's will to that desire. When we say, or even think that this one or that one should do this or that, should help here or there, do we not in effect sit in judgment on them? and this judging of others is a dangerous occupation. It is at the base of the temptation to use ones powers to compel another to do what he is not inclined to do, it is a species of coercion which finds no favor in Theosophy for it is the first step on the road to Black Magic.

QUESTION CCCL.

I very much dislike anything with the name "secret" about it. If Theosophy has discovered some new truths, it seems to me that they should be classified and arranged to form a science, and openly given to the world as are other scientific truths. Let facts be given as they are, without any air of mystery about them. And such facts should be thoroughly studied and understood so far as possible, before one attempts any experiments of that character.

A. F.—It is hardly accurate to say that Theosophy has "discovered some new truths;" better say that it has repeated very old truths which to a generation ignorant of them seem new. These truths concern the constitution of the universe and man, the purpose of life, the laws of development, the motives and aids to right living; and they are scientifically stated, classified, arranged, and proved. Facts are given as they are, the very purpose of the exposition being to acquaint men with knowledge of themselves and of their duty. Nor can it be said that this is done with an air of mystery, for students are distinctly told that verification of the teachings is just as possible to them as to preceding students who, having verified, became in their turn teachers.

In many minds, perhaps most, there is an instinctive dislike to anything bearing the word "secret," and this usually because of resentment at supposing themselves thereby shut out from it. Yet this is not entirely logical. Secrecy would be objectionable if it

was an arbitrary arrangement, or one proceeding from a selfish wish for importance or emolument, or if for any other reason than the inherent necessities of the case. Now these necessities may arise from the nature of the topic, from the unpreparedness of the pupil, or from the interests of the public, and in each class are found analogies in ordinary secular matters. A scientific treatise in a foreign language is virtually secret to one who does not understand that language, though the contents may be entirely unreserved; instruction, or even facts, in certain departments of study are kept back from beginners because they would be certainly misunderstood and misused; knowledge of poisons and explosives is often withheld by chemists from publication because of the danger to honest citizens from conscienceless knaves. Secrecy is therefore in many secular affairs an inherent necessity.

But it is often argued that this has no place in supersensual matters, especially in spiritual truth, and that everything pertaining to such should be scattered broadcast. Yet remembering that the sphere of the supersensual includes the astral as well as the spiritual plane, and that spiritual culture involves a knowledge of both, we must note the analogy with physical matters as to secrecy. If it was conceivable that the whole content of supersensual truth could be stated in any language to man, how much of it could be apprehended by readers? As well complain that the mental stores of an archangel are not put in words. It would be impossible, and useless if possible. Then, too, any right comprehension and use of advanced truth are only practicable as preliminary truth is mastered. Mistake is inevitable if ripe thought is projected on an unripe mind. More than this: if laws, facts, processes, powers on an unfamiliar plane could be made distinct to one not trained up to that plane, there would not be only confusion and error, but an almost certainty of disastrous experiment and a check to true spiritual evolution. No man is qualified to enter such realms until he possesses both the preliminary instruction and the preliminary moral status requisite, and his doing so must be ascertained by appropriate tests, prior to which the farther knowledge has to be held in abeyance. Then, too, public interests are concerned. Premature expositions for which the community are unprepared would divert to wrong lines, imperil spiritual processes, prompt the evil

and selfish to reckless act, and do irreparable injury while accomplishing no good.

It is a wise provision of Occult law that truths of supersensuous planes which would be misleading or dangerous to a student are not disclosed till he is able to perceive to use them aright. This is not a hardship, and no genuine student would wish to penetrate where he ought not to. Like his teachers, he desires his progress to be normal, systematic, healthy and safe, conformed to the obvious fitness of things and to the method based on immemorial experience. If he dislikes secrecy, it is either because he does not apprehend the reasons which necessitate it or because he rebels at admitting that he is as yet unqualified for disclosure, and in either case his dislike is proof that the secrecy was wise. For when he has so far advanced that the secrecy is dispelled and the formerly-hidden things become his own possession, he fully perceives that the Law was just, and in his turn, as a teacher, observes it. When all, without exception, of those who really know, and are therefore qualified to pronounce, affirm that Truth has an esoteric side which can only be revealed to such as by training and self-mastery are fitted to perceive and use it, the presumption is that they must be right. When those who do *not* know and are *not* qualified affirm oppositely, the presumption is that they must be wrong. (See "*Forum*" No. 48, Question CCXL.)

NOTICE.

Questions to be dealt with in the next and subsequent issues of the *Forum*. Answers should be sent in as soon as possible.

1. In answer to Question CCCIII in *The Vahan* of September 1st, says:—"In sleep the etheric double is left with the dense body and the vital currents play through both in the regular way."

I would like more light on this subject, also on the phenomena of dreams as seen in the light of Theosophy.

2. Please explain the difference, if there be any, between a mystic and an occultist. Jacob Boehme is called a great mystic, was he also an occultist?

3. Theosophy as taught in the West emphasizes the importance

of right thinking, and the great aim of students is to acquire control of all mental processes; while Oriental teaching seems to insist more on breathing aright, and the science of breath seems to be the chief study. Why is this difference? Is there any close relation between breathing and thinking?

T. S. ECHOES.

The wave of dissension has now also reached the Scandinavian peninsular. When the secession took place in Europe and America, a good many members of the Society in Sweden declared themselves for Mr. Judge, but they nevertheless, decided to remain within the Society and even applied for a sectional charter from Col. Olcott, which was granted to them last year. The Convention in May went off very harmoniously, and nobody thought of the possibility of secession, but in September the secession took place quite suddenly, owing to pressure being put on them by the "Crusaders," who sent Mrs. Keightley to Sweden for that purpose. Dr. Zander and 126 members sent in their resignation and have formed a new society, called the T. S. in Sweden. The Scandinavian Section still numbers 333 members, and have found a new very able general Secretary in Mr. A. Zettersten, address Nybrogatan 30, Stockholm.

We cannot but deplore the reasons, which has brought about this division and made so many forget that the cause ought to count for more to them than mere personalities. We sincerely trust, that time will restore the disturbed harmony, because it seems such a pity that *all* should not work unitedly together in this great cause of Theosophy, which brings with it the hope of a brighter, more glorious future for mankind. We extend our best wishes to our brothers and sisters of the Scandinavian Section, wishing them peace and prosperity in their work.

NEW ZEALAND SECTION, SEPTEMBER 5, 1896.—There is nothing of much moment to report from the New Zealand Section this month. All the Branches are fairly active, carrying on their meetings and classes with steady interest. At the open meetings original and selected papers on a great variety of subjects are read, and give rise to a good deal of discussion. The secretary of the Wellington Branch writes: "I am happy to say our meetings are better attended, and are becoming more and more interesting," and this might be taken as the general feeling throughout the Section. The various lectures are pretty well attended by the public. In Auckland, Miss Edger has given lectures on "Psychism, Spiritualism, and Spirituality," and on "The Path of Discipleship," both being well attended, the latter

being followed by many questions, and discussion. One may see there is quite a general interest in Theosophic thought and teaching in New Zealand; and it is hoped that the General Secretary's lecturing tour will help to increase the interest. Her arrangements are now complete, and she leaves headquarters for the South on Monday, 6th September. This visit to the Branches will help to consolidate the section, and bring the various scattered districts into closer touch with each other. In Dunedin, Mr. A. W. Maurais delivered an address entitled, "Some Evidence in favor of Theosophical Teachings." Among other points the speaker touched on the connecting links between New Zealand and Australia, and South America, in the shape of types of earth-worms, and an allied marsupial, as evidence of ancient land connection, the continent of Lemuria.

PORTLAND, OREGON.—The Willamette Branch, T. S., has made excellent progress during the month of September, and the work done here by Countess Wachtmeister is resulting in much benefit. From August 29th, when she arrived here, and until September 21st, the day she left for Seattle, Washington, the Countess was busily engaged in her work. Every Sunday she lectured to large audiences in the A. O. U. W. Temple; on Mondays—branch meetings for members of the T. S. only; on Fridays—branch meetings for all interested in Theosophy; while the remaining evenings throughout the week were taken up with gatherings in private houses in different parts of the City where she explained the teachings of Theosophy. She also lectured on "Hypnotism and Magnetism" for the benefit of the Portland Free Reading room, and addressed the regular monthly meeting of the Oregon Vegetarian Society, at which meeting the Countess presented a strong defence of the just claims of Vegetarianism. Thus it will be seen that, during her stay in this City, the staunch disciple of H. P. Blavatsky was very busily engaged, and she succeeded in awakening general interest in the T. S., as well as to make clear to all inquirers the causes which led some branches and members in the U. S. to secede from the universal organization. She also spoke of the fact that, whenever an occasion presented itself, efforts were made by earnest Theosophists the world over to bring about a reconciliation, but without any success so far. The excellent press reports given by the *Oregonian*, our principle daily newspaper, as well as the untiring efforts of some members of the Willamette Branch, have materially aided in making the work of the Countess a real success. So the branch received an increase of nine members with good prospects of more.

WILLIAM H. GALVANI, Sec'y.

Until further notice the address of Mr. Alexander Fullerton, General Secretary American Section, will be 5 University Place, New York City

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.—Ishwara Branch has continued regular weekly meetings through the summer, and has read and discussed Mrs Besant's "Outer Court," Mr. Leadbeater's "Astral Plane," and is now following with "Devachan." The study of these books has brought out, most clearly, some of the fundamental principles of our philosophy, and aided members materially in the understanding of the "Secret Doctrine."

ST. PAUL, MINN.—The St. Paul Theosophical Society has held meetings weekly during the summer; "Devachan," by Mr. Leadbeater, and "Man and his Bodies," by Mrs. Besant, being the matter taken up for study by the branch. The summer meetings having been devoted principally to study, were not advertised, although visitors were not excluded. The branch has added three new members in the past two months and hopes during the winter to start a new branch at Merriam Park—a suburb of St. Paul, where one of the members has organized a class of ladies for the study of Theosophy.

MARIE F. MILLER.

LOS ANGELES, CAL., OCTOBER 12th, 1896.—The activities of Harmony Lodge T. S. continue, and all public meetings are well attended notwithstanding the fact that political gatherings are claiming so much attention at the present time. During the past few weeks there have been Sunday evening lectures on "The Knowable and Unknowable of Spencer," "Universal Brotherhood," "The Theosophy of Tennyson," "Reincarnation," "How Theosophy helps in Daily Life," "The Consolations of Theosophy," and "The Possibility of Human Progress." A new and pleasing feature of the work is a series of monthly socials held at headquarters under the auspices of the ladies of the lodge for the double purpose of becoming better acquainted with our visitors, and adding books to the lending library. The socials sometimes take the form of "Book Socials," each one attending bringing a Theosophical book which he presents to the library. In August a number of books was presented and at the September social almost enough was raised, through voluntary contributions, to add to our stock of books the first and second volumes of the Secret Doctrine. It is a pleasure to be able to say that the Secret Doctrine is now in the library. Considering the comparative short time that we have been before the public, we feel that we have every reason to be encouraged.

MATTIE RANDOLPH, Sec'y.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.—The friends of the Countess Wachtmeister the world over will be glad to hear through MERCURY that the past summer has been a season of much needed and well earned rest for her. The Countess came to Seattle late in June after a laborious tour of California which followed hard upon her activities in Australia. Thoroughly tired in

body and mind she was glad to enjoy a season of perfect quiet. Probably no more delightful summer weather can be found anywhere than on Puget Sound, cool sleep-inviting nights follow upon days warm but never oppressive. Add to these climatic advantages the outlook on lake and bay and snow-capped mountains, the chief of which is Mount Rainier rearing its serene head 15,000 feet into the blue, and the readers of MERCURY can well believe that this tireless worker for the cause of the T. S. enjoyed her vacation to the full. Early in July the Countess Wachtmeister's son, Count Axel Wachtmeister, joined her here, and for several weeks and until the Countess took up again the burden of her work, mother and son enjoyed their rare and brief reunion. A trip later to the glaciers of Alaska proved most restful and delightful to both. It may be interesting to note that the Countess lived while here in a vegetarian family. The summer was, however, not spent in complete idleness. In the early days of July under the inspiration of her presence, were brought together the scattered forces of those who had remained faithful to the old society and Ananda lodge was formed. This new lodge has now twenty members and is fortunate in having at its head as president Mr. Thomas A. Barnes, a most earnest Theosophical student. After delivering a series of lectures in Portland Oregon, the Countess returned here and gave her first lecture on the evening, of September 24th, followed by four others. The newspapers were liberal in their advertisement of the lectures and with other methods of bringing the subject before the public, the result was large audiences on each night. The questions asked at the close of the lectures showed a lively and for the most part an intelligent interest in the general subject of Theosophy. It remains to be said that upon the express invitation of the trustees of the Unitarian church here the Countess delivered a lecture there on Sunday morning, October 4th, which was so well received that upon a second request she spoke again in the church on the following Sunday. The work of the Countess here—lectures, the answering of questions, and parlor talks—have made a deep impression. The interest was very marked among all classes of people. Ananda lodge feels grateful for the help given and looks forward to a useful future. It has a room in the business section of the City which it hopes to make a center for Theosophic thought. The Countess Wachtmeister leaves us with many regrets on our part. Our affection and gratitude follow her.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.—The Shila Branch T. S. is having a period of unusual activity. The accession of three new members and a circulating library is a matter very gratifying to the branch. The coming to the Occident of Messengers from the Orient ("Three Wise Men") is at once gratifying and significant. Each has his own philosophy to represent, but

all agree upon the fundamental principle. A reception was given at headquarters for them, giving to many outside an opportunity to meet them. The Hindu Brahma-Charin has been giving some talks upon the ideal life at the residence of the president (Shila) Mrs. Julia A. Darling, to whose efforts we are indebted for the library. We are making progress and hope to receive more "light on the Path."

ANGELINA WANN, Sec.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.—Golden Gate Branch T. S. held its usual monthly social first Wednesday of the month at which there was a fair attendance. The study evenings of the month have been devoted chiefly to the subject of "Creation" as given in the first two chapters of Genesis. On Wednesday, the 23rd, an address was given upon the same subject by Mr. W. J. Colville, which was listened to with much interest and appreciated by the members. The following week Mr. Colville again attended the meeting, on this occasion answering questions propounded by the audience. Lectures have been delivered regularly each Sunday evening at Portola Hall, by the following: Miss Marie A. Walsh, subject "Are we Free?" two lectures by Mr. Charles P. Nielson, subject "Bhagavad Gita:" and one lecture by Mr. W. J. Colville. A class for the general training of students has been instituted by members of Golden Gate Branch. This class meets every Friday evening, and the training includes studies in the practice of Parliamentary Law as regards the proper conduct of meetings, platform speaking, writing of papers, etc.

J. C. B.

Ceylon Letter.

It is our pleasant duty to report that on the 14th of last month, the foundation stone of the new wing to our headquarters—the Musæus School and Orphanage—was laid by Mrs. Higgins assisted by her pupils, assistants, and friends. The work is now going ahead and we trust that our friends will come forward and give us a helping hand to finish the work. When completed, there will be a guest room for our friends visiting Ceylon. A library will also be attached, and the headquarters will be a center of great activity in the East. The Hope Lodge of the T. S. is doing good work. Its number has been strengthened by the addition of one member, who is earnestly working for the cause. Although few in number the lodge is a band of sincere workers. Our little magazine, "Rays of Light," is doing its usual quota of useful work. We respectfully invite the co-operation of our friends to increase its circulation and correspondence. Our dear brother and friend, Mr. J. C. Staples, the general secretary of Australia, arrived here on the 6th inst., *en route* to London. He was met by Mr. de Abrew and was escorted to our headquarters, where he remained

as the guest of Mrs. Higgins, till the following day when he resumed his voyage to Europe. We are hoping to see Mr. Staples again in a few months on his return voyage to Australia. He has many friends in Ceylon and they are looking forward to his return. Our dear Col. Olcott is expected at Colombo about the middle of next month, *en route* to Madras from Europe.

CHIPS.

BOOK REVIEWS.

THEOSOPHIST for September.—The chief feature of "Diary Leaves" is the power of cure that manifested itself in Col. Olcott while in Ceylon, a power which helped the cause along more than anything else. The simplicity of the telling, the absence of all boastfulness adds much to the charm of this great history. "Dakshinamurti" (continued) treats of the three fires. The fire of the 3rd eye or spiritual fire. "The fire in the mouth of man. This may be called psychical fire. It presides over speech. * * * It is true that man is able to speak but he has not the power lodged in speech." The lowest fire is the physical whose loca is the stomach. "Married State a Stepping-stone to Bahmadharya" by G. V. K. This article written from a scientific point of view strikes the key-note of a reform as much needed in the West as in the East. "A Rationalized Mental Cure" is a reprint from an American journal, it is an admirable exposition of the truths of the Science of Cure as taught by its most advanced teachers. The Editor of the Theosophist, in a short preface to the article says: "The fundamental idea underlying the teachings of this new school variously styled as Divine Science, Christian Science, Mind Cure, etc., is, the *enthronement* of the Higher Self, although they do not so state it; an idea which, apart from some superfluous concomitants, is in entire accord with the practical teachings of Theosophy. "Predestination and Free Will," "Folk-Lore of Mysore" "Zoroastrianism," "Theosophy in Practice" by our Gen. Sec., Alexander Fullerton, "Transmigration in the Avesta," "Raja Yoga Bhashya," with the News, Reviews, etc., make up a very valuable and interesting number. "Cuttings and Comments" speak some very good words for MERCURY which we deeply appreciate.

LE LOTUS BLEU for August.—"Apropos of Socialism" by Guymot, says very little on that subject but deals with the delusion called the search for happiness, and the fact that agitators are the instruments of unknown forces that work upon the delusion of mankind to effect evolution; therefore the search for happiness, with its revolutions and agitations including socialism, tend to good. "Under the Bodhi Tree" by Luxame, is a study on true occultism, a prose poem of far reaching vision. Dr. Pascal continues his study on "Luciferianism." He says that the Palladists reverse

the usual order in the nomenclature of good and evil. With them Lucifer is the god of Light, of goodness, while Adonai is the spirit of darkness, of evil—the devil. “Materialist and Theosophist” gives the end of the 5th letter. “Karma” and “Astral Plane” are continued. The editors announce that henceforth the translation of the “Secret Doctrine” will be printed on a sixteen page section or book so that this part may be easily detached from the magazine, a very happy thought.

We have received a copy of *The Palmist* published by the Roxburghe Press, 15 Victoria Street, Westminster, London. We can recommend it to all students of palmistry. Annual subscription 6 shillings.

THE VAHAN for September.—“Literary Notes” review “The Path of Discipleship” by Annie Besant, “Psychic Photography” by Dr. H. Baraduc, “The growth of the Soul” by Mr. Sinnett. The “Enquirer” discusses “Elemental Essence” Did Buddha deny the existence of “Soul?” “Occult Morality.” We quote from Annie Besant’s answer, “No Theosophist should under any circumstances, tell what appears to him to be a direct falsehood; he may feel perfectly certain that no White Master would direct him to tell a lie, or what appears to him to be a lie, and that if he imagines such a command to come from his “Guide” either he is deluded by a false appearance, or his guide belongs to the ranks of the black or grey. * * * It is of vital importance on the Astral plane to escape glamour and to pierce through deceptive appearances, and this is only possible for those in whose nature there is no taint of falsehood.”

THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALASIA for September.—“The Outlook” glances at discoveries that are bringing Science so near to occult lines especially to the experiments of Dr. Baraduc in photographing thoughts. “The Inadequacy of Materialism,” Questions and Answers and Notes of Activities.

THE BRAHMAVADIN for August.—An admirable lecture on the “Real and Apparent Man” by Swami Vivekananda runs through the two numbers. The editorials are 1st “Discrimination and Passion,” 2d “Creation.” These numbers complete the first volume of this most excellent journal of Vedantin philosophy.

THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.—From Australia comes this wide awake Spiritualistic journal of broad sympathies and high purpose but not so eclectic in character as the “Seen and the Unseen.”

DER FUEHRER (The Guide).—A German monthly devoted to Spiritualism and Magnetism published at Milwaukee, Wis.

DIE UEBERSINNLICHE WELT, Berlin.—“The Haunted House in Falkenburg,” “The Seeress of the Rue Du Paradis” (concluded). These journals deal more with the phenomena than with the philosophy of the occult.

NOTES AND QUERIES for October gives among other curious data “The Rules of the Sufis,” “The Sixth Sense in Hyperphysical Researches” translated from L’Almanach du Magiste, “Lessons in the Formal Concept,” a new method of Logic by J. J. Van Nostrand.

RECEIVED.—*The Brahmavadin, The Exodus, The Maha-Bodhi, The Gleaner, The Temple of Health, Prasnottara.*

Theosophists would do well to place among their studies the old book known as THE BIBLE. Readings from it alternate well and acceptably with selections from the *Vedas* or the *Voice of the Silence*; but it is difficult sometimes to select suitable passages for public reading. Therefore a book of selected passages from the Bible is a handy volume both for public and private use. Such a book has been published under the auspices of the Chicago Woman’s Educational Union by Scott, Foresman and Co., Chicago, Illinois. Price 30 cents.

TO UNATTACHED MEMBERS.—Mrs. Lulu H. Rogers, so well known on the Pacific Coast, has kindly consented to continue the work of corresponding with unattached members of the T. S. Members desiring help in their studies will do well to open up correspondence at once. Address, Mrs. Lulu H. Rogers, Amalie, Kern Co., Cal.

INDIA is well represented now in the U. S. In New York Swami Saradananda has taken up Viveananda’s work. In Brooklyn, Swami Abhayanaanda (the woman monk) teaches Yoga. Mr. Dharmapala and the Secretary of the Jains, Mr. Ghandi, are both in Chicago. Another disciple Sri Rama Krishna, the Swami Avedananda, is working in London, England.

SUBSCRIBERS TO MERCURY will please note that no September number of MERCURY was issued, Volume III began with the August issue. It was thought desirable to miss the month of September, to enable the editors to get the publication ready by the first part of every month instead of the latter part as heretofore.